

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1188
By DeBerry J

A RESOLUTION to honor the life and memory of Reba Jane Thomas and commend her laudable service to Freed-Hardeman University.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly honor the memory of those inimitable public servants who dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Reba Jane Thomas was one such exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to advance her community and Freed-Hardeman University; and

WHEREAS, born December 27, 1935, to Gurnie D. and Elva Hendon Tucker, Mrs. Thomas attended public schools in Decatur and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, before earning her Bachelor's degree and Master's degree from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa; and

WHEREAS, commencing upon an illustrious tenure at Freed-Hardeman University in the fall of 1958, Mrs. Thomas served the school with great acumen and alacrity in a variety of capacities until her retirement in 2000; and

WHEREAS, soon after joining the faculty of Freed-Hardeman University, Miss Reba Jane Tucker became reacquainted with a fellow faculty member, John David Thomas, whom she had met earlier at the 1953 Lipscomb Summer Lectures where they spent time together between lectures; the couple was joined in marriage in the summer of 1961; and

WHEREAS, the blessed union of their marriage produced three daughters, Linda, Laura, and Lisa; and

WHEREAS, a valued faculty member in the Home Economics Department at Freed-Hardeman, Mrs. Thomas was a certified Family and Consumer Sciences Specialist and after

retiring in May 2000, she was named Professor Emeritus of Family and Consumer Sciences; and

WHEREAS, utilizing her many talents to the benefit of the University, Mrs. Thomas was instrumental in introducing computer-aided design to the area of fashion and interior design, making Freed-Hardeman a pioneer school in that geographic area for the use of computers in teaching fashion and interiors; and

WHEREAS, an active and important part of Freed-Hardeman Associates, Mrs. Thomas served as Coordinator of their annual fashion show for twenty years; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Thomas was also responsible for the creation of the Classics modeling group which did freeze modeling for malls and stores; this group often helped with the annual fashion shows; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa McConnell, one of the student coordinators for the annual fashion shows, remembers that "Whether in the class or out, she (Mrs. Thomas) was always concerned about the students and what was going on in their lives." A dedicated mentor to her students, Mrs. Thomas undoubtedly touched countless young lives during her more than three decades at Freed-Hardeman; and

WHEREAS, alongside her husband, Mrs. Thomas devoted forty years of outstanding service to Freed-Hardeman University, its students, faculty, administration, and staff, in addition to serving the Henderson Community as a civic-minded citizen; and

WHEREAS, the Family and Consumer Sciences building, where Mrs. Thomas spent a great deal of her time, was renovated in the summer of 2000, and is soon to be renamed the Thomas-Landon House in honor of the myriad contributions made to Freed-Hardeman University by Dr. and Mrs. Thomas and close family friends, Dr. Robert Landon and the late Mrs. Ouida Landon; and

WHEREAS, not only donating her time and numerous talents to the University, Mrs. Thomas was also active in Henderson Civitan Club, which she had served as President; she had also served as Chairman of Relay for Life; and

WHEREAS, a devout Christian woman, Mrs. Thomas was a member of the Henderson Church of Christ and had participated with her husband in mission trips to Russia; and

WHEREAS, an exemplary citizen and a pillar of her community, Mrs. Thomas always sought to help others and always endeavored to better Henderson; and

WHEREAS, although Mrs. Thomas passed away in November 2000 after a courageous battle with cancer, her memory will continue to be an indelible part of the proud legacy of Freed-Hardeman University; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Thomas epitomized the spirit of a true Tennessean and this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to reflect fondly upon her life of purpose and commitment and acknowledge and applaud her myriad contributions to the citizens of this State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the life and memory of Reba Jane Thomas and commend her laudable service and myriad contributions to Freed-Hardeman University.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.